AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A multiple disc clutch apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of externally splined annular friction plates each having a friction material fixed to one side surface thereof only, and each being formed with engagement teeth at an outer peripheral portion thereof,

a plurality of internally splined annular friction plates each having a friction material fixed to one side surface thereof only, and each being formed with engagement teeth at an inner peripheral portion thereof,

wherein said externally splined friction plates and said internally splined friction plates are alternately arranged and are oriented such that their friction materials are not overlapped with each other,

wherein a plurality of externally splined annular separator plates, each formed with engagement teeth on an outer peripheral portion thereof, are respectively interposed between said internally splined friction plates and said externally splined friction plates~~The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 1~~, and

wherein communication grooves for communicating ~~the~~ an inner periphery ~~thereof~~ with ~~the~~ an outer periphery are formed on at least one of: (i) a surface of ~~said~~ each externally splined friction plate facing a said externally splined separator plate, and (ii) a surface of ~~said~~ each externally splined ~~separate~~ separator plate facing a said externally splined friction plate.

4. (currently amended) A multiple disc clutch apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of externally splined annular friction plates each having a friction material fixed to one side surface thereof only, and each being formed with engagement teeth at an outer peripheral portion thereof,

a plurality of internally splined annular friction plates each having a friction material fixed to one side surface thereof only, and each being formed with engagement teeth at an inner peripheral portion thereof,

wherein said externally splined friction plates and said internally splined friction plates are alternately arranged and are oriented such that their friction materials are not overlapped with each other,

wherein a plurality of internally splined annular separator plates, each formed with engagement teeth on an inner peripheral portion thereof, are respectively interposed between said externally splined friction plates and said internally splined friction plates~~The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 2~~, and

wherein communication grooves for communicating ~~the~~ an inner periphery ~~thereof~~ with ~~the~~ an outer periphery are formed on at least one of: (i) a surface of ~~said~~ each internally splined friction plate facing a said internally splined separator plate, and (ii) a surface of ~~said~~ each internally splined separator plate facing a said internally splined friction plate.

5. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said communication grooves are formed radially from said inner periphery toward said outer periphery.

6. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said communication grooves are formed in a net structure.

7. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said communication grooves comprise:

an annular groove formed between said inner periphery and said outer periphery;

first slanting grooves for communicating said inner periphery with said annular groove; and

second slanting grooves for communicating said annular groove with said outer periphery.

8. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said communication grooves are formed radially from said inner periphery toward said outer periphery.

9. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said communication grooves are formed in a net structure.

10. (previously presented) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said communication grooves comprise:

an annular groove formed between said inner periphery and said outer periphery;

first slanting grooves for communicating said inner periphery with said annular groove; and

second slanting grooves for communicating said annular groove with said outer periphery.

11. (new) A multiple disc clutch apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of rotatable first engagement portions, each including an externally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission, and each further including an externally splined annular separator plate adjacent to another side surface of said externally splined annular friction plate, and

a plurality of second engagement portions, each including an internally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission, wherein said first and second engagement portions are alternately arranged with said friction materials thereof facing a same direction.

12. (new) A multiple disc clutch apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of first engagement portions, each including an externally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission, and

a plurality of rotatable second engagement portions, each including an internally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission, and each further including an internally splined annular separator plate adjacent to another side surface of said internally splined annular friction plate,

wherein said first and second engagement portions are alternately arranged with said friction materials thereof facing a same direction.

13. (new) A multiple disc clutch apparatus, comprising:

a first engagement portion including an externally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission, and

a second engagement portion including an internally splined annular friction plate with only one side surface to which friction material is fixed for torque transmission,

wherein one of said first and said second engagement portions is rotatable and includes an annular separator plate adjacent to another side surface of the respective annular friction plate of said one engagement portion, said annular separator plate being splined to rotate together with the respective annular friction plate, and

wherein said annular friction plates of said first and second engagement portions are arranged with said friction materials thereof facing a same direction.

14. (new) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to claim 13, wherein each of said first and second engagement portions includes a respective said annular separator plate.

15. (new) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to claim 13, including a plurality of said first engagement portions.

16. (new) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to claim 13, including a plurality of said second engagement portions.

17. (new) The multiple disc clutch apparatus according to claim 13, including a plurality of said first engagement portions and a plurality of said second engagement portions.